



## WASHINGTON STATE GRANGE

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March 5, 2013

The Honorable Julius Genachowski  
Chairman, Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

### **RE: Connect America Fund Phase I - Proposed Rulemaking**

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

The Washington State Grange is proud to be a part of the oldest farm-based fraternal organization in our nation. We would like to add our voice to a growing chorus of hard working rural Americans troubled by the lack to access high-speed Internet.

Washington has the largest Grange membership in the nation. There are 256 community granges and 41 county granges across Washington State. We take pride in serving as the voice of farm and rural communities and for our rich tradition of community service.

That's why we're writing to you today. We encourage the Federal Communications Commission to expand broadband access to currently unserved Washington residences by proceeding with the distribution of the Connect America Fund (CAF) Phase I resource. We urge you to promptly finalize rules so that the \$185 million unclaimed in 2012 and the \$300 million anticipated for 2013 can be invested quickly to deploy broadband to the unserved across America.

Broadband Internet is a strong economic driver that creates jobs, allows for distance education courses, remote telehealth applications and provides small businesses with the resources they require to stay competitive. Far too often rural America is not much more than an afterthought for policymakers in far away Washington, D.C.

Rural Americans cannot wait any longer to gain access to this most vital resource. We urge you to expedite the network investments that finally would bring broadband to many corners of rural America.

We appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Duane Hamp  
President

Holli Johnson  
Legislative Director

*In Essentials, Unity • In Non-Essentials, Liberty • In All Things, Charity*